<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, and

supersedes and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings.

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1.   (Cancelled)

2.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ 19,

wherein said response ~~information~~ text preparation means prepares said response

~~information~~ text in a form corresponding to a medium at a response addressee.

3.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ 19,

further comprising: definition information storage means for storing definition information

that defines a response content for a status, wherein said response content determination

means determines a response content by referring to said definition information storage

means.

4.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ 19,

wherein said status acquired by said status acquisition means indicates there are a plurality

of statuses that occur at the same time.

5.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ 19,

wherein said response content preparation means includes response content information

preparation data storage means for storing fixed information for each portion of a content that is prepared, and employs said fixed information to prepare a response content.

6.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ 19, wherein said response content preparation means includes response content preparation rule storage means for storing a response content preparation rule, and employs said response content preparation rule to prepare a response content.

7.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ 19, wherein said response ~~information~~ text preparation means includes:

text preparation means for preparing text that serves as part of said response ~~information~~ text; and

additional sentence preparation means for preparing ~~an~~ the opening ~~sentence~~ or a closing ~~sentence~~ phrase.

8.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~1~~ 19, wherein said response ~~information~~ text output means transmits said response ~~information~~ text using electronic mail.

9.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said response ~~information~~ text output means includes addition means for adding an electronic mail header or an electronic mail footer to the response ~~information~~ text prepared by said response ~~information~~ text preparation means.

- 3 -

10. (Currently Amended) A~~-~~response apparatus according to claim ~~+~~ 19, wherein said response ~~information~~ text output means outputs the response ~~information~~ text to a telephone.

11. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~+~~ 10, wherein ~~said~~ the telephone is a portable telephone.

12. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said response ~~information~~ text output means transmits the response ~~information~~ text to a management system.

13. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 12, wherein ~~said~~ the management system is a database management system.

14. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 12, wherein ~~said~~ the management system is a file management system.

15. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim ~~+~~ 19, wherein said response ~~information~~ text output means transmits the response ~~information~~ text using a home page.

16.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim + 19, wherein said response ~~information~~ text output means outputs the response ~~information~~ text using sound.

17.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim + 19, wherein said response ~~information~~ text output means outputs the response ~~information~~ text to a pocket bell.

18.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim + 19, wherein said response ~~information~~ text output means outputs the response ~~information~~ text to a facsimile machine.

19.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus comprising:

status acquisition means for acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;

discrimination means for discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;

response addressee determination means for determining a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;

response medium determination means for determining a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;

response message determination means for determining a response message in accordance with the discriminated type of the error;

response ~~information~~ <u>text</u> preparation means for preparing response ~~information including~~ <u>text by appending an opening or closing phrase that is characteristic text of the determined response medium to</u> the determined response message in a text form ~~corresponding to the determined response medium~~; and

response ~~information~~ <u>text</u> output means for outputting ~~said~~ <u>the</u> prepared response ~~information~~ <u>text</u> to said determined response addressee using the determined response medium.

20.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means selects a response procedure from a plurality of available response procedures.

21.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a response procedure in consonance with the degree of importance of said status.

22.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines whether or not a response is to be transmitted.

23.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a response content.

24. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means designates a response medium.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means designates a response timing.

27. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means designates a language type.

28. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines the degree of detail in an explanation.

29. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a condition for transmission of a response.

30. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a re-response procedure.

31. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said response procedure determination means determines the number of re-responses.

32. (Currently Amended) A response apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising: definition information storage means for storing definition information that defines a response procedure for a status, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a response procedure by referring to said definition information storage means.

33. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information indicate a single status.

34. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information also include a combination composed of a plurality of statuses.

35. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein status data in said definition information also include a status that changes as time elapses.

36. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 32, wherein statuses in said definition information also include a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

37. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising response procedure designation means for designating a response procedure for each status, wherein, in consonance with said acquired status, said response procedure

selection means selects a response procedure designated by said response procedure designation means.

38.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus comprising:

response procedure determination means for determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure;

response information output means for outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

response result determination means for determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the response information; and

re-response control means for, when said response result determination means ascertains that said response has failed, permitting said response procedure determination means to determine a re-response procedure so that a response addressee or a response medium is different between of the re-response procedure and is different from that of the determined response procedure leading to the failed response, permitting said response information preparation means to prepare re-response information in accordance with the re-response procedures, and permitting said response information output means to output the re-response information.

39.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 38, further comprising status acquisition means for acquiring a status, wherein said response

procedure determination means determines a response procedure in consonance with said status that is acquired.

40.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 38, wherein said response procedure determination means selects a response procedure from a plurality of available response procedures.

41.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 38, wherein said response result determination means employs a status after said response information has been output to determine whether or not a response has failed.

42.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 41, wherein said status after said response information has been output is a status obtained when a predetermined time has elapsed following output of said response information.

43.   (Cancelled)

44.   (Currently Amended) A response apparatus comprising:

response procedure determination means for determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

response information preparation means for preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedures;

response information output means for outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

response addressee status acquisition means for acquiring a status for the determined response addressee;

determination means for employing the status for the determined response addressee that is acquired by said response addressee status acquisition means to determine whether or not a person at the determined response addressee can manage the response; and

re-response control means for, when said determination means determines that said person cannot manage the response, permitting said response procedure determination means to determine a re-response procedure so that a re-response addressee or a re-response medium is different between of the re-response procedure and is different from that of the determined response procedure leading to the response which could not be managed by said person, permitting said response information preparation means to prepare re-response information in accordance with the re-response procedure, and permitting said response information output means to output the re-response information in accordance with the re-response procedure.

45.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 44, further comprising status acquisition means for acquiring a status, wherein said response procedure determination means determines a response procedure in consonance with said status that is acquired.

46. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 44, wherein said response procedure determination means selects a response procedure from a plurality of available response procedures.

47. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 44, wherein, after said response information has been output, said determination means employs a reply from said response addressee to determine whether or not said response addressee is capable of handling a response.

48. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 47, wherein, in consonance with whether said reply is transmitted within a predetermined period of time after said response information has been output, said determination means determines whether or not said response addressee is capable of handling a response.

49. (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 47, wherein, in consonance with whether or not the effect ability to cope with a response is described in said reply, said determination means determines whether or not said response addressee is capable of handling a response.

50. (Cancelled)

51.   (Original) A response apparatus according to claim 44, wherein said determination means performs a determination before transmission of a response to a response addressee that is an object for said determination.

52.   (Cancelled)

53.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim ~~52~~ 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response information preparation step, the ~~said~~ response information is prepared in a form corresponding to a medium at a response addressee.

54.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim ~~52~~ 70, further comprising the step of storing definition information that defines a response content for a status, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response content determination step, a response content is determined by referring to ~~said~~ the definition information.

55.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim ~~52~~ 70, wherein ~~said~~ the status acquired in ~~at~~ said status acquisition step indicates there are a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

56.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim ~~52~~ 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ response content preparation step, response content information preparation data storage means is referred to in which is stored fixed information for each portion of a

- 13 -

content that is prepared, and ~~said~~ the fixed information is employed to prepare a response content.

57. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim ~~52~~ 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response content preparation step, response content preparation rule storage means is referred to in which is stored a response content preparation rule, and ~~said~~ the response content preparation rule is employed to prepare a response content.

58. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim ~~52~~ 70, wherein said response information preparation step includes:

a text preparation step, of preparing text of ~~said~~ the response information; and

an additional sentence preparation step, of preparing ~~an~~ the opening ~~sentence~~ or a closing ~~sentence~~ phrase.

59. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim ~~52~~ 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response information output step, the ~~said~~ response information is transmitted using electronic mail.

60. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 59, wherein said response information output step includes an addition step, of adding an electronic mail header or an electronic mail footer to response information prepared in ~~at~~ said response information preparation step.

61.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 52 70, wherein, in at said response information output step, response information is output to a telephone.

62.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 61, wherein said the telephone is a portable telephone.

63.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 52 70, wherein, in at said response information output step, response information is transmitted to a management system.

64.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 63, wherein said the management system is a database management system.

65.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 63, wherein said the management system is a file management system.

66.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 52 70, wherein, in at said response information output step, response information is transmitted using a home page.

67.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 52 70, wherein, in at said response information output step, response information is output using sound.

68.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 52 70, wherein, in at said response information output step, response information is output to a pocket bell.

69.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 52 70, wherein, in at said response information output step, response information is output to a facsimile machine.

70.   (Currently Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:

acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;

discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;

determining a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;

determining a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;

determining a response message in accordance with the discriminated type of the error;

preparing response information including text by appending an opening or closing phrase that is characteristic text of the determined response medium to the

determined response message in a text form ~~corresponding to the determined response medium~~; and

outputting ~~said~~ the prepared response ~~information~~ text to ~~said~~ the determined response addressee using the determined response medium.

71. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response procedure determination step, a response procedure is selected from a plurality of available response procedures.

72. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response procedure determination step, a response procedure is determined in consonance with the degree of importance of ~~said~~ the status.

73. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response procedure determination step, whether or not a response is to be transmitted is determined.

74. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response procedure determination step, a response content is designated.

75. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in ~~at~~ said response procedure determination step, a response medium is designated.

76.   (Cancelled)

77.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in at said response procedure determination step, a response timing is designated.

78.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in at said response procedure determination step, a language type is designated.

79.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in at said response procedure determination step, the degree of detail in an explanation is determined.

80.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in at said response procedure determination step, a condition for transmission of a response is determined.

81.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, wherein, in at said response procedure determination step, a re-response procedure is determined.

82.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 81, wherein, in at said response procedure determination step, the number of re-responses is determined.

- 18 -

83.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, further comprising: a definition information storage step, of storing definition information that defines a response procedure for a status, wherein, in at said response procedure determination step, a response procedure is determined by referring to said definition information storage step.

84.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in said the definition information indicate a single status.

85.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in said the definition information also include a combination composed of a plurality of statuses.

86.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 83, wherein status data in said the definition information also include a status that changes as time elapses.

87.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 83, wherein statuses in said the definition information also include a plurality of statuses that occur at the same time.

88.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 70, further comprising a response procedure designation step, of designating a response

procedure for each status, wherein, in consonance with ~~said~~ the acquired status, in ~~at~~ said

response procedure selection step, a response procedure is selected that has been

designated in ~~at~~ said response procedure designation step.

89.   (Currently Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:

determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a

response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the determined response

procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the determined response

addressee using the determined response medium;

determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the

response information; and

determining, when it is ascertained in ~~at~~ said response result determination

step that ~~said~~ the response has failed, a re-response procedure so that a re-response

addressee or a re-response medium ~~is different between~~ of the re-response procedure ~~and~~ is

different from that of the determined response procedure leading to the failed response,

preparing re-response information in ~~at~~ said response information preparation step in

accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information in

~~at~~ said response information output step.

90.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 89,

further comprising a status acquisition step, of acquiring a status, wherein, in ~~at~~ said

response procedure determination step, a response procedure is determined in consonance with ~~said~~ <u>the</u> status that is acquired.

91.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 89, wherein, <u>in</u> ~~at~~ said response procedure determination step, a response procedure is selected from a plurality of available response procedures.

92.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 89, wherein, <u>in</u> ~~at~~ said response result determination step, a status after ~~said~~ <u>the</u> response information has been output is employed to determine whether or not a response has failed.

93.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 92, wherein ~~said~~ <u>the</u> status after ~~said~~ <u>the</u> response information has been output is a status obtained when a predetermined time has elapsed following output of ~~said~~ <u>the</u> response information.

94.   (Cancelled)

95.   (Currently Amended) A response method comprising the steps of:

determining a response procedure;

preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

outputting the prepared response information to the determined response

addressee using the determined response medium;

acquiring a status for the determined response addressee;

employing the status for the determined response addressee that is acquired

at in said response addressee status acquisition step to determine whether or not a person at

the determined response addressee can manage the response; and

determining, when it is ascertained in at said determination step that said the

person cannot manage the response, a re-response procedure so that a re-response

addressee or a re-response medium is different between of the re-response procedure and is

different from that of the determined response procedure leading to the response which

could not be managed by said person in at said response procedure determination step,

preparing re-response information in at said response information preparation step in

accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information in

at said response information output step in accordance with the re-response procedure.

96. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 95,

further comprising a status acquisition step, of acquiring a status, wherein, in at said

response procedure determination step, a response procedure is determined in consonance

with said the status that is acquired.

97. (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 95,

wherein, in at said response procedure determination step, a response procedure is selected

from a plurality of available response procedures.

98.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 95, wherein, in at said determination step, after said the response information has been output, a reply from said the response addressee is employed to determine whether or not said the response addressee is capable of handling a response.

99.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 98, wherein, in at said determination step, whether or not said the response addressee is capable of handling a response is determined in consonance with whether said the reply is transmitted within a predetermined period of time after said the response information has been output.

100.   (Currently Amended) A response method according to claim 98, wherein, in at said determination step, whether or not said the response addressee is capable of handling a response is determined in consonance with whether or not the effect ability to cope with a response is described in said the reply.

101.   (Cancelled)

102.   (Original) A response method according to claim 95, wherein said determination is performed before transmission of a response to a response addressee that is an object for said determination.

103.   (Cancelled)

104. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

acquiring a status of a machine to be checked;

discriminating a type of an error indicated by the acquired status;

determining a response addressee depending upon the discriminated type of the error;

determining a response medium based on the discriminated type of the error;

determining a response message in accordance with the discriminated type of the error;

preparing response ~~information including~~ text by appending an opening or closing phrase that is characteristic text of the determined response medium to the determined response message in a text form corresponding to the determined response medium; and

outputting ~~said~~ the prepared response ~~information~~ text to ~~said~~ the determined response addressee in accordance with the determined response procedure.

105. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

determining whether or not a response has failed as a result of outputting the response information; and

determining, when it is ascertained in ~~at~~ said response result determination step that ~~said~~ the response has failed, a re-response procedure so that a re-response addressee or a re-response medium ~~is different between~~ of the re-response procedure ~~and~~ is different from that of the determined response procedure leading to the failed response in ~~said~~ at response procedure determination ~~means~~ step, preparing re-response information in ~~at~~ said response information preparation step in accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information in ~~at~~ said response information output step.

106. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium in which is stored a response program for controlling a computer to transmit a response, said program comprising codes for enabling said computer to perform the steps of:

determining a response procedure including a response addressee and a response medium;

preparing response information in accordance with the determined response procedure;

outputting the prepared response information to the determined response addressee using the determined response medium;

acquiring a status for the determined response addressee;

employing the status for the determined response addressee that is acquired

~~in~~ at said response addressee status acquisition step to determine whether or not a person at

the determined response addressee can manage the response; and

determining, when it is ascertained ~~in~~ at said determination step that ~~said~~ the

person cannot manage the response, a re-response procedure so that a re-response

addressee or a re-response medium ~~is different between~~ of the re-response procedure ~~and~~ is

different from that of the determined response procedure leading to the response which

could not be managed by ~~said~~ the person ~~in~~ at said response procedure determination step,

preparing re-response information ~~in~~ at said response information preparation step in

accordance with the re-response procedure, and outputting the re-response information in

at said response information output step in accordance with the re-response procedure.